

Canadian neighbors and support passage of the resolution.

TANF REAUTHORIZATION

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 2002

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, in the past several weeks we have heard a lot of talk about TANF reauthorization. The Bush Administration wants to increase the number of hours that welfare recipients work to 40. Twenty-four hours would have to be in work-related activities, activities that do not include education or vocational training.

But even in the remaining 16 hours, the limits on education and job training are severe in the Republican proposals. Recipients can receive vocational training, education, or rehabilitation and substance abuse treatment for a total of three months in a 24 month period.

We know that education is one of the main avenues for a person to move out of poverty. A year 2000 survey of people who left the welfare rolls after 1996 found that only those workers who had at least a two-year post secondary or vocational degree were able to rise above the poverty line.

Single female heads of households with a high school diploma are 60 percent more likely to have jobs. That number increases to 95 percent when they have an associate's degree.

We need to focus less on putting people in jobs, and focus more on training people for careers with room for advancement. TANF Reauthorization should be about reducing poverty, not reducing caseloads.

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING WORK OF THE CONGRESSIONAL TOWN MEETING STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 8, 2002

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, today, I recognize the outstanding work done by participants in my Student Congressional Town Meeting held this spring at the University of Vermont. These participants were part of a group of high school students from around Vermont who testified about the concerns they have as teenagers, and about what they would like to see government do regarding these concerns.

FINANCIAL AID AND HIGHER EDUCATION

(By Candace Crosby and Kim Dickenson Apr. 8, 2002)

CANDACE CROSBY. As students preparing for college, we find that the financial issue is becoming a larger problem compared to what our parents had to pay for college tuition. According to a VSAC representative, 70 to 80 percent of students today need some type of financial aid. The rates for tuition are high, but what's worse is that they are rising at rate of about 5 percent a year all over the country.

What concerns us as future college students is how we will be able to pay for the tuition, and tuition doesn't include room and

board and other expenses. We think that, today, there is a lack of adequate financial aid for college-bound students.

When preparing to pay for college, teens in Vermont turn to VSAC—which is the Vermont Student Association Corporation—for financial help. Of course, VSAC is a healthy program, but are they able to give financial aid to all the students that need it? No. Does VSAC have enough money to give scholarships and grants to the teens that need it at the same increasing rate that college tuition is rising? No.

We spoke to a representative from VSAC who gave us the information that VSAC has increased their funds for scholarships and financial aid, but has not been able to keep up with the increasing tuition costs. Based on one of VSAC's grants, the Vermont Incentive Grant, fulltime graduates can get between \$500 and \$8,650 for one year to help pay for college. The \$8,650 is an extremely helpful amount of money to receive, but not all the teens going to college will receive this amount. Even if a student gets the minimum, \$500, it will not even begin to help for any student to pay for their college education. It will only cover a few of the books that students will need for their first year of college.

KIM DICKENSON. Online at USNews.com, we searched for college tuitions for various Vermont colleges. We looked up the cost at Castleton State College, Lyndon State College, UVM, Johnson State College, VTC and Southern Vermont College. We found that the average tuition costs for these schools was approximately \$6,825. We found that the average room and board add approximately \$5,520 more to tuition. Together, this amounts to \$12,345. Even more interesting is that some of the room-and-board costs are higher than the tuition costs. At Castleton State College, tuition is \$5,392, and room and board is \$5,530. \$12,000 is a lot of money, even with VSAC's help, but students leave colleges thousands of dollars in debt.

What about students who want to go to college outside of Vermont? These costs are astronomical, and the tuition alone can be \$20,000 or \$30,000, because the students are not residents of the state. How are students supposed to pay for college without a lot of financial aid when they go to these schools?

0 percent of Vermont students take out loans provided by VSAC. We found a list of loans that could be borrowed from VSAC, and the amounts ranged from \$1,000 to \$50,000. Even if a student went to a college that had a tuition of \$25,000 a year, and they took out a loan to pay for the first two years, they would have to pay back 73,615. The student pays 23,615 more dollars in interest. That is practically paying for a third year of college.

We think that is a ridiculous amount. We thought of a few solutions so that students can receive more financial aid and won't have to have an enormous debt to pay back. The burden of debt would decrease if funds for scholarships, grants and other financial aid would be increased. We think the federal and state governments should fund VSAC's financial aid programs even more than they already do. This would enable more students to receive money so that the financial burden on families wouldn't be as great.

THE RIGHTS OF THE ABENAKI

(By Evan Worth, Alan Blackman, Nicolette Baron, and Steph Bernath April 8, 2002)

EVAN WORTH. We are doing the issue of Abenaki rights. And as of now, they are not recognized as an Indian tribe. They have been pushing, seeking federal recognition for the past 25 years, which is a criteria for federal recognition, which they need to have been a continuous entity since 1900, they

need to have existed as a community since before 1900, there needs to be a political influence throughout history, they need a membership criteria and governing procedures, they need roots before 1900, and they cannot be members of any other type of group, and cannot be stripped of their status.

ALAN BLACKMAN. Vermont seems to have a very long-held tradition in being first in giving people, specific groups of people, rights—outlawing slavery, granting rights for all men to vote, and, more recently, civil unions. I feel we should continue this. And in doing this, it is another way to, so to speak, take Vermont forward.

The main concern against this, particularly Governor Dean's apprehension with granting them recognition is, casinos and land claims. Chief April Rushlow has claimed on numerous occasions that, quite frankly, they have higher concerns, such as burial grounds and things of this nature. The main reason they want this, what provoked this, actually, such a strong pursuit of this, was kids being taunted at school for being Abenaki, but not being recognized by the government. What they want is essentially grants for education, healthcare, things they couldn't get as of now. And I feel that it is a good idea and it would be a step in the right direction to grant them recognition.

NICOLETTE BARON. Some of the qualms that state government has cited for not giving recognition to the Abenaki was extra rights, aside from those already given to minorities, the fact that it will lead to federal recognition, and they can institute their own laws and have their own fish and wildlife regulations that do not need to concur with the guidelines of the state.

On the issue of the minorities, the minorities that are around the nation and around the state are African-Americans and Hispanics. While those groups do have an important part in the history of this state and the nation, the Abenakis were among the first inhabitants of this state, and they are the only native American tribe that has not been recognized.

State recognition could lead to federal recognition, which would give the Abenaki rights to make their own laws, including those regarding fish and wildlife regulations. The laws that they would make would most likely conform to the Constitution of the United States, not go beyond that or not be radical, which I think is what the state government is concerned with. All laws would be to prohibit harm and to make it, you know. And fishing and wildlife laws would be based on the need to eat, and not hunting game, not game-hunting. And being recognized as a tribe would allow them to sell their wares, like basket weaving, which is a tradition in the Abenaki, and to get better economic status for these people. And it would give them rights with scholarships, and that's really important, to send their kids to school.

STEPH BERNATH. What I find to be very disturbing about the Abenaki struggle for recognition is the negativity exhibited by the state department. I have yet to hear the acknowledgement from the state department that something positive may come out of the Abenaki getting the recognition they obviously deserve. Nearly every argument brought forth by the state of Vermont has been critical of what the tribe may do once they receive recognition. It has been made clear very many times that the Abenaki are not interested in gambling or hurting Vermonters in any way. Chief April Rushlow has clarified this one too many times.

The victims of this criticism, on the other hand, the Abenaki, have openly acknowledged they are aware of what the State Department fears may happen to those people who live on Abenaki land if they are given